

WHAT'S NEXT? OPPORTUNITIES IN TRANSITION, WEEK 4

Scripture used: Luke 3:21-22 & Luke 4: 1-2 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued his 6-week sermon series “What’s Next?” with another sermon diving into “the middle passage”— that difficult period between an ending and a new beginning. He used the example of Jesus as described by the Apostle Luke. The first three chapters of Luke discuss the prophetic context and divine blessing of Jesus. His miraculous birth was foretold, and His early life was full of examples of His future glory. But Jesus didn’t emerge into public ministry until after His baptism and subsequent trials in the wilderness. Even Jesus experienced a middle passage, a space in between where He was forced to question Himself, His identity, and His faith!

KEY POINTS

The Big Idea: Navigating transition well is a part of life and faith.

Every transition has three parts:

- 1) An ending, where we learn to say goodbye and let go.
- 2) A middle passage or wilderness, which is “the space between.”
- 3) A new beginning.

The hardest question to ask during a middle passage is “**Who am I?**” Jesus was declared as a “dearly beloved son” that brought God “great joy” (Luke 3:22). But Jesus had not actually done anything yet! He needed faith to then confront the devil. Each of the three trials in Luke Chapter 4 was directly questioning the declaration of God:

- 1) **Trial #1: Hunger** (Luke 4:3-4) Bread was just a metaphor for spiritual hunger. Jesus had to confront those things that He truly desired.
- 2) **Trial #2: Service** (Luke 4:5-8) The devil wanted Jesus to worship and serve him in return for power over the entire world. But Jesus knew He had to let go of the world and focus instead of God’s purpose for Him.
- 3) **Trial #3: Proof** (Luke 4:9-12) Jesus did not need to prove anything to the devil. His faith in God was absolute. It didn’t matter what anyone else thought.

God wants to teach us how to navigate transitions, not rush through them. We often need to do significant amounts of work before we are ready for a new beginning. This requires us to:

- 1) **Spend time alone.** Think deeply about this period of transition and why it’s happening.
- 2) **Converse with God.** Ask Him to reveal what preparation is required to enter the next phase.
- 3) **Reflect.** Identify the most important insights of this time in the wilderness and what they mean.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** We grow in faith, grace, and love when we do a good job navigating transitions. Working through “the space between” is hard, but necessary. Think back to the transition you identified last week. What work is God asking of you to successfully transition to a new beginning?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** We can struggle during transitions because we do not embrace the new purpose that God has given us. Where is God leading you? What could be the new purpose that God has for you? Are you willing to let go of your old purposes in order to do God’s will?
- 3) **DO** Transitions are hard. You will need the support of friends, family, and God. Go around your Life Group and say your transition out loud. Then pray to God with this week’s declaration “God, help me face my middle passage!”